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INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT

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SUBJECT Comments on the Appointment of Bulganin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union

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1. Marshal Nikolay Bulganin is considered to be a political general whose earlier appointment as Minister of the Armed Forces appears to have been a tribute to his political reliability and organizational ability rather than to any specific military capacity or any confidence in him on the part of the fighting generals. Despite his administrative ability, he is too old and has reached an important position too late to exert any considerable political influence in his own right. He should, therefore, be considered as a straw man for Khrushchev.
2. Khrushchev probably considers Bulganin the best pawn at his disposal because of Bulganin's many interests. In particular, it is believed that he was concerned in the past with the reorganization of various intelligence and security services. Also, although the appointment to the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers of a Marshal of the Soviet Union and a Minister of the Armed Forces may have the effect of demonstrating to the outside world an perhaps to the lower levels of the Soviet Army that the Soviet armed forces are solidly identified with Khrushchev's ascendancy, it is worth noting that the latter is apparently sufficiently confident of his position to make an appointment which is not primarily or necessarily aimed at placating the fighting generals.

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